



Milwaukee County

Supervisor Joe Sanfelippo, 17th District

Supervisor Elizabeth M. Coggs, 10th District

Chair, Finance & Audit Committee

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STATE TAKES OVER, FUMBLES FOODSHARE PROGRAM IN MILWAUKEE COUNTY

Milwaukee, WI – Milwaukee County Supervisors Joe Sanfelippo and Elizabeth M. Coggs released the following statement regarding the FoodShare program in Milwaukee County:

“One year ago, during the 2009 County Budget process, the County Board considered an idea from County Executive Scott Walker to improve the Economic Support Division call center service at the Marcia P. Coggs center, which would have shortened the application process for FoodShare and other assistance programs by reducing wait times for callers. This proposal was in response to the unacceptable 47-minute average wait for people lucky enough to get through. While this idea had merit, the Board chose to move in another direction.

“For the first part of 2009, thanks primarily to the efforts of the County Board, wait times were slowly improving and progress was being made. Then, out of the clear blue, in a move that reeked of politics, the State of Wisconsin moved in and took over the program in May.

“This week, the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* is reporting that wait times now average more than one hour, and nearly two-thirds of applications filed since the State took over were not processed within the 30-day time requirement. Furthermore, of the 16,200 applications filed in Milwaukee County alone, more than 9,300 were not processed within 30 days and nearly 1,400 cases took more than three months to complete. To make matters worse, the State has reduced the call center’s hours and days of operation, making it even more difficult for callers to get through. Of course, before a person can even place a call, they must figure out which of three phone numbers to use, since the State did away with the single number that Milwaukee County had in place.

“The State has not only reversed all of the progress made by Milwaukee County, but their gross incompetence has also made the problem much worse by increasing wait times, reducing hours of service and confusing our constituents who are trying to get assistance. It is abundantly clear that this takeover was motivated by something other than a desire to help our citizens. It is shameful for the Governor to use the most vulnerable and neediest of Milwaukee County residents as pawns in his political game.”

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